

Medical Officer's Annual Report for the year 1945.

The Minister of Health has directed that the Report for 1945 shall again be abbreviated and confined to essential matters and exceptional measures. He desires it to contain information on the steps taken to combat infestation and on the state of water supplies. Statistics are to be preserved but not included in this report.

The health of the population remained good and there was no unusual prevalence of any infectious disease.

Immunisation against diphtheria proceeded satisfactorily. It was estimated that in the middle of the year 1945 77% of the child population aged 5 to 15 were immunised and 59% of those aged under 5. Comparable figures for the end of the year are not available because an alteration was made by the Ministry of Health in the form of return and method of compiling statistics. No case of diphtheria was notified during the year.

Infestation. The prevalence of scabies and pediculosis decreased considerably during the year and is no longer a serious problem. The Council now has no provision for cleansing these cases since its Isolation Hospital was finally closed at the beginning of 1945. The County Council has continued, chiefly for school-children, the Minor Ailment Clinic which was conducted by the First Aid Post in Blandford. Verminous patients from the Rural District who are within reach of this Clinic can get treatment there.

Water Supplies. The greater part of the District is dependent on wells. Being mostly in the chalk formation these give a reasonably pure and generally sufficient supply. In dry seasons however the shallower wells fail. Two or three villages were seriously short of water for a considerable part of the year 1945.

13 Parishes are provided, some of them only partly, with piped supplies. 18 Parishes are not so provided.

There are 6 separate piped supplies in the district, owned or managed with one exception by private estates or companies. Four of these are small and not very efficient.

In one case the spring which has been the source of intake for many years failed and untreated water from a brook had to be run into the piped supply, consumers being instructed to boil all drinking water.

Standpipes are the usual provision and only a minority of the working class houses have water laid on inside the house.

39 samples were sent for bacteriological examination from the various piped supplies. 25 of these were of the raw water, 5 being reported as suspicious and the rest satisfactory. 14 samples were taken of water going into supply after chlorination. Bad reports on two of these were received. Four chemical analysis were made and gave good results.

The Council has plans for an extensive public water supply to cover the whole district but at present has no water undertaking of its own.

L. B. SCOTT. M.D., D.P.H..

Medical Officer of Health.

